



**David J. Della**  
Seattle City Councilmember

## SEATTLE PERSPECTIVE

*Getting Things Done & Getting Seattle Working Again*  
Newsletter from Seattle City Councilmember David J. Della  
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#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **GREETINGS**

Fall is upon us and that means one thing for your Seattle City Council – its time to take a look at the city budget. Beginning at the end of September, and over the course of October and November, the City Council will be taking a closer look at the Mayor's proposed budget for the upcoming year. We welcome and encourage your participation in this process. In this edition of *Seattle Perspective*, I will provide an overview of the budget process and how you can get involved.

Over the past few months, I have been working hard to represent you and to provide leadership on the issues that are important to our city. My typical days begin at the early hours of the morning and then conclude in the very late evening with meetings or events in the community. In addition to meeting with constituents or participating in Council meetings, I have also toured many of our 397 city parks. As Chair of the Parks Committee, visiting all of our parks has been especially helpful in making policy decisions with regard to preserving our open spaces and city parks.

Everywhere I go, and especially in the wake of the tragic devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, a top concern of residents is public safety. Just as I have visited many of our parks and met with a number of Parks Department staff, it has been equally important to participate in 'ride-alongs' with police officers from various precincts throughout the city. I have also met with many of our firefighters at different fire stations. As the vice-chair for the Council's Public Safety, Civil Rights, and Arts Committee, these periodic ride-alongs and visits to fire stations have helped me see first hand the challenges facing our police officers and firefighters. I also developed a deeper understanding of public safety concerns in various neighborhoods.

I hope that you find this newsletter to be insightful and informative. Please continue to contact me to share your thoughts on neighborhood and city issues. I look forward to hearing from you and continuing to work with you to get things done and get Seattle working again.

Sincerely,

**Councilmember David J. Della**

(206) 684-8806  
David.Della@seattle.gov

## MOST RECENT NEWS

### Monorail

You have most likely been following the latest news about the Seattle Monorail Project (SMP) and the Green Line. In the last edition of *Seattle Perspective*, I reported to you on the proposed financing package that was being considered by the SMP Board to pay for the Green Line of the Monorail. Then, I was deeply concerned about the status and viability of the Monorail. Since that time, the SMP has done little to alleviate my own concerns as well as the concerns of many others – including my colleagues on the City Council and our Mayor.

Only after intense public outcry, the SMP Board decided to reject a controversial financing proposal that would have resulted in taxpayers footing the bill for more than \$11 billion over more than 50 years. In August, the Mayor set a deadline of September 15th for the SMP to present a viable and financially sound plan to construct the Green Line. The SMP let the deadline pass presenting little new information and no alternatives for implementing the construction and operation of the Green Line in a fiscally responsible manner.

Developing a city-wide mass transit system is of paramount importance for Seattle. However, it is also my

responsibility as your city councilmember, that any mass transit options we vote for should be financially sound and viable. I am not convinced that the SMP can deliver to the people of our city what was initially promised. The SMP continues to stand by overly optimistic motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) projections in estimating their revenues. This is a major problem. You might recall that part of the reason as to why the controversial financing plan came about in the first place was because the SMP took in approximately 30% less revenue than they originally expected. The bottom line is that the SMP Board has not adequately addressed how to fill this wide gap in their revenue projections.

As a Councilmember, I have a fiduciary duty to the people of Seattle. The SMP has spent \$180 million to date and continues to take in nearly \$1 million a week in tax revenues. It would be unconscionable to stand on the sidelines and let this happen when clearly no solid plans are emerging or going to emerge. The City Council does not have the authority to shut down the SMP – only the people, the SMP Board, and the legislature have that authority. We do, however, have the authority to deny permits for the use of our city's rights-of-way.

After failing to present any new information or options in accordance with the September 15th deadline set by the Mayor, the SMP Board met on September 22 to deliberate on options they could pursue. They chose to take no action.

We don't always have easy or popular decisions to make. But, we have a duty to protect the people of Seattle. After watching the SMP Board ignore the warnings of state officials and the Mayor, the City Council took a stand and voted unanimously to deny the use of city rights-of-way to the SMP on September 23.

Because of the City Council decision, the SMP Board met in an emergency session. At this meeting they elected to put a measure before the voters this November that would reduce the proposed Green Line by three miles (Alaska to Dravus). The latest proposal for the Green Line also eliminates the Morgan Junction, Market Street, 65th Street and 85th Street stations. If this newly proposed route is not approved by voters, the measure stipulates that the, "*SMP Board shall terminate the SMP as quickly as practicable.*"

The voters created the Seattle Monorail Project, and now, voters will have a final say.

## PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

### How You Can Help Shape the City's Budget



The budget review and adoption process is one of the most important responsibilities I have as your Councilmember. The Mayor presented his budget proposal on September 26. City Council is now set to begin our review. We have the authority to revise, add, delete, or postpone any projects or programs in the Mayor's proposed budget. Council focuses all attention on the city budget review and typically does not schedule any regular committee meetings during this time. We do this to ensure that we have time to receive your input and so that the adopted budget for the City truly reflects your priorities.

I want to hear from you! I'm hoping that you will help shape your city's budget by contacting my office. *What are your top priorities for funding? What are items that the City should postpone? What city services would you cut? What city services would you add?*

*Also, please take note of the 'Upcoming Events' section of this newsletter for key dates and opportunities to become involved in the budget process.*

### Immigrant and Refugee Community Issues

I was proud to join Councilmember Tom Rasmussen in sponsoring a brown bag forum and a resolution to develop an action plan to identify and address issues facing Seattle's immigrant and refugee communities. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that Seattle is home to nearly 100,000 immigrants from many different countries. I am committed to improving the lives of all of our residents regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin or language. This resolution most recently adopted by Council will establish a community advisory task force to advise the City on issues facing Seattle's growing immigrant and refugee populations.

### Extending a Helping Hand

Many watched the news in horror as we witnessed the devastation that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita wreaked on the gulf states. My office received several inquiries from concerned residents who wanted to know what our city could do to aid these relief efforts. I was proud to work with Councilmembers Rasmussen, Licata and others to develop legislation that directs the City's Personnel Department to submit a proposal to City Council by mid-October that will permit city employees to convert accrued vacation hours to cash

contributions to help victims of these latest disasters. For those City employees who would like to help, but where cash is not readily available, a program that allows the conversion of vacation hours to cash is an excellent option. This was successfully implemented by King County, which raised \$100,000, to support relief efforts in Southeast Asia after it was hit by the tsunami last year.

For information about how you can help, please visit the following website:  
<http://www.seattle.gov/html/citizen/hurricaneaid.htm#help>.

### KEEPING PARKS GREEN, CLEAN, ACCESSIBLE & VIBRANT

#### Planning for the Future: Major Maintenance & Strategic Business Plans for our Parks

During last year's budget deliberations, I initiated, and the City Council voted, to require the Executive to prepare a Parks Major Maintenance Plan which will document how the Parks



(Joining Representative Ed Murray, Tim Ceis, and Ken Bounds to celebrate the grand opening of Cal Anderson Park.)



## KEEPING PARKS GREEN, CLEAN, ACCESSIBLE & VIBRANT

Department assesses their existing facilities to determine when major maintenance and repairs are required. As stewards of the City's parks and open spaces and as stewards of the funds used to maintain and repair them, it is important for the Council to set funding priorities for major maintenance and repair projects. The final plan will be included in the 2007-08 biennial budget.

I also asked the Parks Department to develop a companion plan to the Major Maintenance Plan. A comprehensive and well-thought out Strategic Business Plan for Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is important to the long-term stability of our parks system. DPR faces severe potential revenue shortfalls in the coming years. Between 2001 and 2004, DPR eliminated more than \$10 million in city general fund support. Further reductions were made as part of the adopted 2005 budget. At the same time, DPR has renovated, expanded, or built new facilities and parks. Existing funding sources and fees will be insufficient to meet future costs. There is an estimated \$10.8 million in new costs to the DPR operating budget beginning in 2009 – when the 2000 Pro Parks Levy is set to expire. DPR has presented to the Parks, Neighborhoods and Education Committee a proposal for a Strategic Business Plan. However, I would like to see this proposal strengthened. I believe that it is vital to engage city residents and parks users early on in the process of putting together a

comprehensive strategic plan. It is of utmost importance to begin this planning process with the core values, priorities, and feedback of city residents and park users. I will be sure that communities throughout the City are involved in the planning process and to solicit your input.



(Opening day at Cal Anderson Park.)

### Soundways Property: Preserving Open Space

Last year, the Mayor proposed to sell what is commonly referred to as "Soundways," a city property located near South Seattle Community College, to raise funds to support critical community projects. City Council did not agree with this approach. We thought that the city would lose precious open space where wetlands and steep slopes provide wildlife habitat. We believed that we needed to provide ample opportunity for conservation groups to purchase this property and gave them time to do so. More recently, after hearing from conservation groups that they needed more time to raise funds to purchase the property, Council passed a resolution to extend the deadline.

In preparation of announcing his proposed budget, the Mayor responded to the City Council's concerns and announced that he will not sell the Soundways property, after all. This outcome shows that that this City Council has proven that we can and will continue to work together to represent you and reflect your priorities.

### Summer Nights

Vital repairs to the central waterfront's Piers 62 and 63 forced the popular *Summer Nights* concert series to South Lake Union this summer. *One Reel*, an independent non-profit organization, operates *Summer Nights* and uses proceeds from the series to help fund *Bumbershoot* and other events. Recently, the Parks Department asked *One Reel* to relocate *Summer Nights* from South Lake Union so that construction of the new and improved South Lake Union Park can begin. The Parks Department, the Mayor, and I have been working hard to secure a location for *Summer Nights*. Timing is of the essence because *One Reel* needs ample time to secure first-rate artists. *Bumbershoot* is enjoyed by many Seattleites and has become a premiere public summer event in our city. The success of *Summer Nights* is crucial to the success of *Bumbershoot*. I am committed to working with my colleagues on the City Council and the Parks Department to find a win-win solution for everyone.

## BUILDING STRONG SCHOOLS & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

### Fostering Partnerships with Schools

At our most recent joint meeting of the Seattle City Council and the Seattle School Board (which I co-chair, in partnership with Seattle School Board Director, Irene Stewart), school officials provided an updated financial overview of Seattle Public Schools to the City Council.

Superintendent Raj Manhas briefed us regarding the formation of a new task force charged with looking at long-term, strategic approaches to help our city's schools. Superintendent Manhas selected a variety of community and business leaders with extensive expertise to participate in this group entitled, "The Superintendent's Committee for Investing in Education Excellence." This committee will continue to encourage public involvement and feedback throughout their review process over the coming weeks. More information about how to get involved with this effort can be found on the School District's website at:

<http://www.seattleschools.org/area/committeeforexc/index.dxml>

Also discussed at the Joint City Schools Meeting was the value that our public schools have with respect to our city's economy, the vitality of our neighborhoods and our city's overall future. Councilmembers who participated agreed that funding our public educational system, while vital to the success of our city, is the

paramount duty of our state elected officials. I will work hard to find ways to work with the state legislature to fully fund our city's public schools and support initiatives which will effectively close the achievement gap.

### Digital Learning Commons

Councilmember Jim Compton and I teamed up to facilitate a brown bag discussion on the Digital Learning Commons (DLC) program. Now in its third year, the DLC provides about 14,000 Seattle Public School students (30,000 statewide) with a new set of online courses, electronic reference tools, and sophisticated aids for college and scholarship applications and career planning. Along with DLC staff, there were students who shared their experiences and answered questions. Former Governor Gary Locke, the DLC's first and strongest supporter, also participated. DLC is an excellent alternative way of learning that gives students in the state access to an individually customized, unlimited curriculum, taught at the student's own pace. My goal is to close the achievement gap for all Seattle children, regardless of their backgrounds or income levels.

Using a digital form of learning, which can be accessed from homes, schools, or libraries, is an excellent alternative teaching tool that we can provide to students so that they can succeed academically.

### Young Athletes

City Council recognized and congratulated the accomplishments of Seattle's young athletes who participated in two recent 2005 national track and field championships. At the 39th USA Track and Field National Junior Olympic Track and Field Championships, over 51 young athletes from Seattle's Parks and Recreation programs at Rainier Beach, Van Asselt, Rainier and Miller Community Centers competed. My office facilitated the adoption of a proclamation to recognize this outstanding achievement. We also acknowledged the many proud parents, coaches and many other supporters who joined and cheered for the young athletes at City Hall.



*(Councilmember Della with champion athletes from the Rainier Beach Track Club.)*

### Bringing the City Council into Your Neighborhood

The Parks, Neighborhoods and Education Committee usually meets in City Hall's Council Chambers the first and third Wednesday of the month at 2:00 PM. This past summer, however, one of these meetings took place at

## BUILDING STRONG SCHOOLS & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

the Yesler Community Center. When I first took office, I pledged to make the decision making process more accessible. Holding our regular committee meetings in the evening and at a community center is one simple way for our residents to talk with their city representatives.

### **Small and Simple Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) Projects**

I was proud to participate at a recent NMF Small and Simple Grant awards ceremony. The purpose of the NMF is to engage neighborhood groups throughout the City to help build better communities. The Small and Simple Fund is a component of the NMF program and is intended to make awards for smaller scale and less complex projects. Applications for this fund are accepted four times a year and recipients are granted awards of up to \$15,000. Organizations are required to match NMF dollars with locally raised money, donated materials, and volunteer labor. This round of Small and Simple awards totaled \$221,618 and will be matched with community support valued at \$317,000.

While these may be 'Small and Simple' awards, these dollars will go a long way in making neighborhood improvements. I salute the Department of Neighborhoods staff and all of the community members who help make this program a tremendous success year after year.



*(Councilmember Della with recipients of Small and Simple NMF awards.)*

Applications for the next round of Small and Simple NMF awards are due to the Department of Neighborhoods on Monday, October 3, 2005. For more information, please visit the City's website at: <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf> or call the Department of Neighborhoods at: (206) 684-0464.

### **Neighborhood Matching Fund Large Project Awards**

The Parks, Neighborhoods and Education Committee officially adopted recommendations on NMF Large Project awards. Volunteers, who serve on the NMF Citywide Review Team, with help from the Department of Neighborhoods, conducted a rigorous application process to put forward the recommended projects to the Council.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge hard-working volunteer groups who partner with the City to improve our neighborhoods and foster community building in the process. This round of Large

Project awards totaled more than \$1.5 million and will be matched with community support valued at \$2.7 million.

### **Emergency Readiness: Is Seattle Prepared?**

The community and City Council need to know whether or not we are prepared in the event of a disaster here. If we're not ready, what steps should we take to get us prepared? Seattle sits on top of a fault line and it's only a matter of time when a disastrous earthquake will hit our region. In the past, we've also been hit by extreme high winds and inclement weather, causing power outages and mudslides. At a recent Council briefing, executive staff gave a presentation about how well the City is prepared. I understand that we have plans in place. However, Seattle, like many other cities, needs to improve our preparations for any disaster. I am committed to working with my colleagues to ensure that our City has prepared viable plans which provide sufficient support for our first responder teams as well as address the care and safety of our most vulnerable population, such as seniors and children. Finally, we need to ensure that effective coordination is in place among the city, county, state and federal governments.



## BUILDING STRONG SCHOOLS & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

### Fishermen's Terminal

This quarter, I organized a discussion among the Council, staff from the Port, an economist and a member of the Fishermen's Terminal (FT) Advisory Committee in conjunction with a screening of the documentary film entitled, "Fishermen's Terminal." Fishermen's Terminal has been the traditional home of the North Pacific Fishing Fleet for nearly a century. Set in 2001, the film documents the controversy surrounding the Port of Seattle's decision to open this blue-collar



*(Councilmember Della on a site tour at the Fishermen's Terminal with Michael Knudsen and Marsha Holbrook, Port of Seattle.)*

workplace to pleasure boats. The film also documented the story of small-boat commercial fishermen coming together to fight this

decision which would have resounding implications on their future and the future of Seattle's fishing industry. I will work towards keeping a diversified economic base in our city and protecting those industries which have historically provided stable family-wage jobs.

To view the film and discussion, please go to:

<http://www2.seattlechannel.org/media/videoList.asp?ID=56>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Following are some important dates and events that may be of interest to you!*

### **Council Budget Public Hearing** **Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>**

**5:30 PM**

*(You can testify via phone beginning at 4:30 PM)*

City Hall, Council Chambers

### **King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

Sixth Annual *Take Action Against Domestic Violence Awards* Reception

**Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>**

**4:30-6:30 PM**

Bertha Knight Landes Room,  
City Hall RSVP: 206-568-5454 or  
[kccadv@kccadv.org](mailto:kccadv@kccadv.org)

### **Seattle Public Schools' Superintendent's Community Advisory Committee on Investing for Educational Excellence**

Community Meeting

**Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>**

**6:00-8:00 PM**

John Stanford Center Auditorium  
2445 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. South, Seattle

### **Council Budget Public Hearing** **Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**5:30 PM**

*(You can testify via phone beginning at 4:30 PM)* City Hall, Council Chambers

### **Full Council Adopts Budget** **Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup>**

**2:00 PM**

City Hall, Council Chamber